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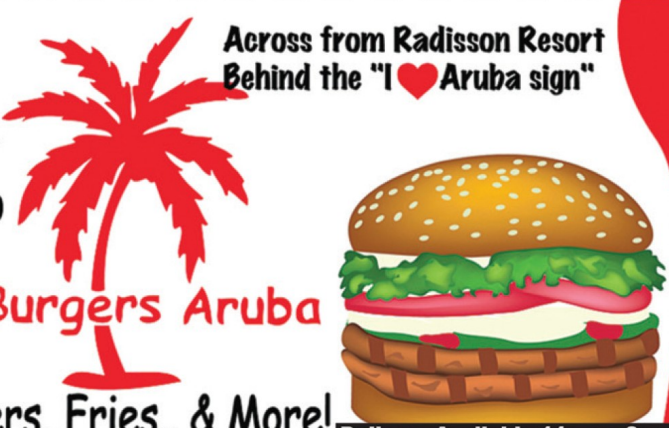
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National Library's main branch officially reopens



Astrid Britten, Lara Kuiperi and Minister Dowers

After nearly two years of extensive structural renovations

conducted an officially opening ceremony Sunday evening, January 13.

Aruba's Minister of Justice and Education, Arthur Dowers, joined BNA's Director Astrid Britten and Assistant Director Lourdes Croes in welcoming a number of local luminaries connected to the arts. The cultural evening was an example of how the library is a center for not only literary, but performing and visual arts. "The heart of the community," as Director Britten described it, has often been the site of musical performances and art exposi-



Digna Lacle Herrera reciting her poem



Tamara Richardson co author of Sibling Voices of Sunrise City

and an attractive face lift, the main branch of Aruba's National Library on George Madurostraat in Oranjestad,



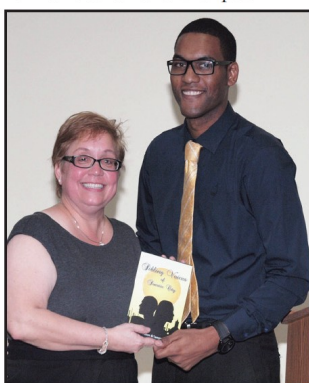
BNA Director, Minister and honored guests

tions, drawing the community together to enhance their appreciation of culture and intellect.

Aruba's first library opened in 1949, and then moved to the landmark building that is now the Ministry of Culture. The more modern branch was opened in 1986, providing an environment where students could research, and youngsters would learn to enjoy the written word. Both the Minister and BNA Director expressed that providing a place where young minds can explore and expand is the essential purpose of the library.

Towards this purpose, the renovations include a drastic expansion of digital services, bringing the BNA into the 21st century with increased Internet access for visitors.

The opening ceremonies paid homage to all the arts, with musical performances by Livio Hermans on the piano, Choral Group La Escala and finally, mellow jazz from famed percussionist Carlos Bislip. Noted poetess and teacher



Gregory Richardson donates a copy of his book "Sibling Voices of Sunrise City" to the library

Digna Lacle-Herrera recited her original work for the occasion, "Our Pride is!" via video. A new book, titled

"Sibling Voices of Sunrise City" by sister and brother writing team, Tamara and Gregory Richardson, was launched. It is a collection of prose and poetry reflecting the impact of being raised in Aruba's east end community of San Nicolas, with its highly multi-cultural make-up. Finally, poet Roberto Croes presented his tribute to the library with an original work titled "A Book."

All this week, the library will continue its celebratory program with daily after school and evening events. Today at from 4:00 to 5:00 PM will be the presentation of the book "The Princess who did not want to Brush her Hair," by Olga Buckley and Desiree Correa. From 7:30 to 9:30 PM will be a preview of the new film regarding the Compa Nanzi folkloric tales of the region, with storytellers Amina Meeks-Blackwood, Emerita Emerencia and author Carol Britton-Gonzalez from Cosa Rica, with a presentation of the film "Anansi's Gift."

Tomorrow, Wednesday, will be a workshop for aspir-

ing writers ages 16 and over from 3:30 to 5:00 PM with Jules Marchena. In the evening a concert of local



Carlos Bislip and the new exposition room

music will be presented beginning at 7:30.

Thursday evening's program will be dedicated to the art of dance, with a performance by Club di Movimiento at 6:00 PM. The afternoon will feature the Jamaican storyteller, Amina Meeks Blackwood. She will perform Caribbean stories for all ages from 4:00 to 5:00 PM.

Islanders are urged to come and enjoy their newly refurbished library and the complete week of programs they have organized, dedicated to all aspects of the arts.

By Rosalie Klein